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RHHJJAA/JICPAC HONOLULU HI PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TAIPEI 000489

SENSITIVE  
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SUBJECT: REPRESENTATIVES LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART AND MARIO  
DIAZ-BALART VISITS TAIWAN TO COMMEMORATE TRA ANNIVERSARY

REF: TAIPEI 00417

¶1. (SBU) Summary. Taiwan officials expressed their appreciation to Representatives Lincoln Diaz-Balart and Mario Diaz-Balart for their efforts to reaffirm U.S. commitment to the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) during their April 6-8 visit to Taiwan, and emphasized the importance of the U.S. relationship, and stressed the need to strengthen bilateral defense and economic ties. End Summary.

LY Speaker: U.S. Security Cooperation a Bulwark of Democracy  
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¶2. (SBU) Congressional Taiwan Caucus co-chair Representative Lincoln Diaz-Balart and Representative Mario Diaz-Balart visited Taiwan April 6-8 to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the passage of the TRA. In addition to meeting President Ma Ying-Jeou (reftel), the delegation met with a range of government and political party officials. Legislative Yuan President Wang Jin-pyng expressed his appreciation for the Congressmen's support of Taiwan during a cordial April 7 meeting. Wang noted that Taiwan has developed into a democracy with a two-party political system that seriously takes into account the people's will and desires. He emphasized that continued U.S. security assistance and political support are needed to help maintain and even to further develop Taiwan's democracy in the face of continued pressures from the PRC. Wang also noted Taiwan's desire to meaningfully participate in international organizations and sought U.S. support to develop its international space.

Defense Minister: U.S. Arms Key to Cross-Strait Talks  
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¶3. (SBU) U.S. Congressional support has been essential to Taiwan's security in the 30 years since the signing of the TRA, Minister of Defense Chen Chao-min told the visiting Representatives during an April 8 meeting. The United States is Taiwan's most important partner and the comprehensive relations provided for under the TRA allowed the island to develop economically and politically. U.S. support is particularly important now, in an era of warming cross-Strait ties, Chen emphasized, because it allows Taiwan to engage China from a position of confidence. U.S. military support continues to be essential to Taiwan's security, Chen said,

and expressed appreciation for then-President Bush's decision in October 2008 to move forward with the sale of weapons systems that will help address the growing cross-Strait military imbalance. However, he noted, Taiwan will continue to need to buy additional defense equipment, to include additional PAC-3 surface-to-air missile batteries, utility helicopters, F-16 C/Ds and submarines.

14. (SBU) Thanking Chen for the warm hospitality shown to his delegation, Rep. Lincoln Diaz-Balart reiterated the support of the entire 128-member Congressional Taiwan Caucus for the TRA as the cornerstone of U.S.-Taiwan relations. The Caucus, Diaz-Balart emphasized, will work to ensure that the new U.S. administration maintains these friendly relations. The Congressman also expressed his recognition of Taiwan fragile defense posture relative to the PRC following his visit to Chiayi Air Base. The delegation was particularly concerned with the quantity and quality of Chinese weapons arrayed against Taiwan and assured the Minister that they will do everything in their power to push the Executive Branch to provide Taiwan with all the defense items it needs to ensure a credible defense and allow for Taiwan to negotiate from a position of strength.

#### Delegation Members

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15. (U) The U.S. delegation included Rep. Lincoln Diaz-Balart, Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart, Lincoln Diaz-Balart, Chief of Staff Ana Carbonell, Mario Diaz-Balart Chief of

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Staff Nilda Pedrosa, Lincoln Diaz-Balart Senior Legislative Assistant Autumn Morley, Mario Diaz-Balart Senior Legislative Assistant Miguel Mendoza.

16. (SBU) Reps. Diaz-Balart did not have an opportunity to clear this message.  
YOUNG